

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and to provide information concerning the British Churches in wartime, as well as their contribution to post-war reconstruction.

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THE KING'S CALL TO PRAYER AND DEDICATION

The following message was broadcast by the King in the evening of "D Day," June 6, 1944:—

Four years ago, our Nation and Empire stood alone against an overwhelming enemy, with our backs to the wall. Tested as never before in our history, in God's providence we survived that test; the spirit of the people, resolute, dedicated, burned like a bright flame, lit surely from those Unseen Fires which nothing can quench.

Now once more a supreme test has to be faced. This time the challenge is not to fight to survive but to fight to win the final victory for the good cause. Once again what is demanded from us all is something more than courage and endurance; we need a revival of spirit, a new unconquerable resolve. After nearly five years of toil and suffering, we must renew that crusading impulse on which we entered the war and met its darkest hour. We and our Allies are sure that our fight is against evil and for a world in which goodness and honour may be the foundation of the life of men in every land.

That we may be worthily matched with this new summons of destiny, I desire solemnly to call my people to prayer and dedication. We are not unmindful of our own shortcomings, past and present. We shall ask not that God may do our will, but that we may be enabled to do the will of God; and we dare to believe that God has used our Nation and Empire as an instrument for fulfilling His high purpose.

I hope that throughout the present crisis of the liberation of Europe there may be offered up earnest, continuous, and widespread prayer. We who remain in this land can most effectively enter into the sufferings of subjugated Europe by prayer, whereby we can fortify the determination of our sailors, soldiers, and airmen who go forth to set the captives free.

The Queen joins with me in sending you this message. She well understands the anxieties and cares of our womenfolk at this time and she knows that many of them will find, as she does herself, fresh strength and comfort in such waiting upon God. She feels that many women will be glad in this way to keep vigil with their menfolk as they man the ships, storm the beaches, and fill the skies.

At this historic moment surely not one of us is too busy, too young, or too old to play a part in a nation-wide, perchance a world-wide, vigil of prayer as the great crusade sets forth. If from every place of worship, from home and factory, from men and women of all ages and many races and occupations, our intercessions rise, then, please God, both now and in a future not remote the predictions of an ancient Psalm may be fulfilled: "The Lord will give strength unto His people: the Lord will give His people the blessing of peace."

THE LIBERATION OF ROME

In a statement made on June 5th the Dean of St. Paul's, the Very Rev. W. R. Matthews, D.D., said:—

"The liberation of Rome means much to every Christian. Rome is the scene of the persecution under Nero in which probably St. Peter and possibly St. Paul witnessed unto death. It was the centre from which Law went out into the barbarian world. For centuries it was the centre of Christendom. No one who has any sense of history and of cultural and religious values can refrain from thanksgiving that this city, so closely linked with our religion and civilisation, has been rescued undamaged from the modern barbarians. We may hope that the Vatican itself may enjoy a greater measure of freedom than has been possible under the restrictions imposed upon them by the German occupation of Rome."

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THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND THE EUROPEAN CHURCHES

In his address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland the new Moderator, the Rt. Rev. E. J. Hagan, O.B.E., D.D., spoke especially of the unity of the Church and of the many links binding the Church of Scotland to the Continental Churches of the Reformed tradition.

"Is it not significant," he said, "that in the decade before the war, while all the great States were steadily moving apart and coming to consider first their own situation and interests in separation from the others, at the same time the Churches were steadily drawing more closely together, and finally established the framework of their instrument of common consultation and action, the World Council of Churches, just on the eve of the war itself? In the tragedy which has overtaken so many countries of Europe the existence of this World Council has already proved its worth. In the last Great War from the moment the first shot was fired, the Churches retired within their own national frontiers and spoke only to and for their own people. But in this war the bonds that unite the Churches have never been broken, even where physical communication is now impossible. All the suffering Churches are vividly aware that they do not stand alone, but are supported by the prayers and by the love of the great Body of Christ of which they are a part. Not only so, but the leaders of these suffering Churches when, as in duty bound, they protest against the injustice and inhumanity of the occupying power, they all, Bergravv, Kraemer, Boegner, take care to speak not in the name of national justice and of national rights, but in the name of those Universal Truths which are embodied in the Christian Faith, and as ministers, not of national bodies, but of the Church Universal. It is facts like these which give me reason to hope that when the historian of the future has to narrate the marvellous spiritual renaissance in Europe after the Second World War, he will be able to ascribe it to the united action and service of all parts of the Church Universal, of which the Church of Scotland rejoices to be one."

After paying a striking tribute to the debt owed to the Continental Reformed Churches by the Church of Scotland and to their courageous stand against tyranny, Dr. Hagan concluded:

"But what of the future? These Churches have been overtaken by a catastrophe more tragic than any in their history. Their congregations are dispersed, their buildings destroyed, their funds lost, their leaders interned, their men forced into labour camps, their liberty of worship and testimony

severely limited or wholly denied. Their one hope is that their lands will again become the scene of battles, which may indeed complete their devastation, but will assuredly achieve their liberation.

"It is evident that the work of reconstruction will be enormous, and that to take a worthy part in it will test severely the resources of the Church of Scotland. But I have no fear of the results, if only the effort be grounded on the historic convictions of the Christian Faith. Under the sway of Jesus Christ, no people is more generous or open-handed than our people. Let us then set forth with all our powers the faith as it is in Him. Let us proclaim the sovereignty of God and the obedient reverence that is due to His name, the free grace that is in Jesus Christ, sufficient unto salvation, the new power that is in the Holy Spirit, to trust, to endure, and to serve. Let us move our people to repentance, give them the assurance of forgiveness, and call them into the new life that begins here and never ends. Upheld by that faith our people will be strong, not only to confront the unknown ventures which still await us, but to present themselves a living sacrifice for Christ, and their goods a willing gift for Him and His.

"Then in God's own time, as we believe, a day will come when the last battle is fought and the 'cease fire' is sounded, and Europe will be free. With what eagerness shall we go forth to greet our brothers who have suffered and overcome. We shall join with them in re-gathering their scattered flocks, in rebuilding their churches, in reconstituting their ministry, and in helping them to recall the multitudes to Christ, whom they had lost a while, but may now regain. Should we succeed in that task we might ensure not merely the regeneration of a continent, but the peace of the whole world. Let us not imagine, however, that all the giving will be on the one side, and all the receiving on the other. We will bear to them our material gifts, but they will have spiritual gifts to bestow upon us which they have received as they followed Christ by the Way of the Cross. Out of their sufferings they will speak to us of the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit for all extremities, of the loyalty of the Lord Jesus Christ to all His promises, and of the untold resources that have been prepared for us by our Father—God."

BRITAIN AND CECUMENICAL YOUTH MOVEMENTS

Two events during last week-end marked the continued British interest in the worldwide Christian Youth Movement.

On Saturday, June 3rd, an international Youth Rally was held at the Albert Hall,

London, under the auspices of the British Council of Churches. Five thousand young people attended, and many Churches and nations were represented. The gathering was in continuation of the Movement inaugurated by the Amsterdam Christian Youth Conference in 1939, and was held under the same banner, "Christus Victor." The Archbishop of Canterbury presided. A similar rally is being held at Edinburgh on June 10th, under the chairmanship of the Very Rev. J. Hutchison Cockburn, D.D.

On Sunday the centenary of the founding of the Y.M.C.A. was celebrated by a great service in St. Paul's Cathedral. Mr. John G. Winant, American Ambassador, gave an opening address, and the lesson was read by the Chinese Ambassador. Prayers were said by the Dean and by the Rev. Prof. R. D. Whitehorn, representing the Free Churches.

The sermon was preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dr. Temple said that the Y.M.C.A. was among the earliest of the movements which in the last 100 years had overleapt all national divisions and created a world-wide fellowship. It was no accident that the gathering which, in all the history of the world, brought together representatives of more nations than any other was the Christian Youth Conference held in Amsterdam within a month of the outbreak of war. In no other name than that of Christ could so many races and nations have been assembled.

At this moment they were especially conscious of the invaluable service which the Y.M.C.A. rendered to the men of the armed forces.

BRITISH REPLY TO AMERICAN THREE-FAITH DECLARATION

The following is the text of a message addressed by the Executive Committee of the Council of Christians and Jews to the 146 Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish signatories of the recent American Three-Faith Declaration on World Peace:

"The Council of Christians and Jews in Great Britain warmly welcomes the statement on the conditions of world peace signed by Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish religious leaders in America on October 7th, 1943, and finds itself in general agreement with the principles therein laid down. It is in accordance with the Council's aims to urge that ethical and religious principles be applied to relations between groups, to the social life of peoples, and to international relations.

"The Council believes that it is the duty of religious people to pray and work for peace and for the reconciliation of enemies,

for the abolition of war and all the evils it involves and for a new era of confidence and constructive service. The re-establishment of moral law, of respect for the rights of the person, especially those of the poor, the weak and the backward, and of responsibility towards the whole community, must be first charges on the energies of all right-thinking men and women. Church and Synagogue have the duty not only to exhort men in this sense but also to infuse with their spirit those agencies, diplomatic, political, economic, social and benevolent, through which a happier world order will be established.

"There can be no permanent peace without a religious foundation. The fact that both Church and Synagogue are international and supra-national, with traditions older than the political and economic structure of the modern world, entitles them to speak with authority at just such a time as this; they were founded on the divine law, on which also all social righteousness must rest. To reconstitute political institutions, to restart the agriculture, industry and trade of the world, to re-establish international institutions representative of the unity and interdependence of the nations and their well-being, will mainly be the responsibility of representative statesmen and assemblies. All Christians and Jews, however, will share the responsibility of putting the plans and actions of statesmen to the tests of religion, and of seeing that they correspond with righteousness, mercy and peace."

AMERICAN METHODISTS IMPORTANT DECISIONS

The American Methodist Conference was held at Kansas City in May. The most controversial matter brought before the Conference was the question of the Methodist Church's attitude to war. In 1940 the following paragraph was included in a statement on this subject:—"We stand upon this ground, that the Methodist Church, as an institution, cannot endorse war nor support, nor participate in it." The matter was reopened during the recent conference, and after much discussion, a minority report from a Committee was adopted, including the sentence "In Christ's name we ask for the blessing of God upon the men of the Armed Forces, and we pray for victory."

Statistics showed that of eight million Methodists in the U.S.A. one million are in the Forces. There are 600 conscientious objectors.

A motion for the "ultimate elimination" of racial discrimination led to the passing of a unanimous resolution asking that Negroes should receive equality in housing, in transportation and in educational facilities, and

urged the repeal of "discriminatory legislation against the immigration and naturalisation of Orientals of friendly nations and, as soon as possible, of all nations" (*New York Times*, May 6th).

Twenty-five million dollars were voted for post-war reconstruction work to be known as a "Crusade for Christ." The first two purposes envisaged for this enterprise were (1) the establishment of an international organisation for permanent peace, (2) the rebuilding of Church property and the rehabilitation of the population in war-stricken areas.

RELIGIOUS UNDERGROUND PAPERS IN DENMARK

Amongst the underground newspapers now published in Denmark is one called *Kirkens Front* (*The Church Front*). Some copies of this have recently reached this country, and our readers will no doubt be interested to know what it prints. It deals, of course, with purely Church affairs, but also has articles on such subjects as sabotage. In order to provide an example of the way in which the paper treats Church problems we publish below an extract from the issue dated December 12th last year, dealing with pastors who help the occupying authorities, and reporting an incident when a sermon by Kaj Munk, in Copenhagen, was forbidden by German authorities. Our readers will know that since that date Kaj Munk has been brutally murdered. Another underground journal contains Kaj Munk's last sermon, and we hope to publish this on a later occasion.

The Danish Church

"What is to be our attitude towards those of the clergy who to some extent have adopted the Nazi philosophy? In the third number of *The Church Front* we published a list of some of these clergy. We have, consequently, devoted much careful consideration to this question—partly because one or two of them have asked us to print an official denial.

"We now wish to comment as follows:

"Our announcements are based solely on concrete and, in our opinion, decisive evidence. So serious a charge against a colleague cannot be based upon public opinion or even upon a solitary incident. There were some instances where we wished to examine the clergyman's position more closely, precisely because we had nothing more to go by than a widely-held opinion.

"This entire question must be raised once more, since those clergymen who formerly had Nazi leanings are now changing their standpoint and denying their former opinions. Why, even Pastor Meinhardt-Jensen,

leader of the now disbanded Nazi Clergymen's Association, denies being a Nazi. Another clergyman who at one time had German leanings took an active part in aiding the Jews this October. And so the outlines are becoming blurred on an issue where absolute clarity is of the utmost importance.

"*The Church Front* has no wish to upset the good relations between a clergyman and his parishioners, so long as he can keep any unpatriotic sympathies he may have distinct from his work. We have every reason to wish that fruitful relations should exist between the vicar and his parish—provided his work is on a Danish and a Christian basis. But it must be understood that these men have been guilty of a misdemeanour entailing temporary isolation, even among their colleagues.

"*The Church Front* will from now on report only those clergymen who may in future be found patently acting in the German interests. But we shall also be obliged to draw attention to those whose weak and dishonest attitude is proving harmful to Church and nation. We regret having to do this. We know we shall make enemies, but we are firmly convinced that this is a necessary task if *The Church Front* is to stand firm. We will do all we can to speak nothing but the truth. We shall be more than willing to publish a denial if we should chance to pass on a false accusation. We are fully aware of the responsibilities imposed on us by this task.

The Kaj Munk Affair

"As stated in the previous number, Kaj Munk was to have preached on Sunday, November 21st, at 2 p.m., in the Church of the Holy Spirit in Copenhagen; but on the Saturday afternoon Dr. Best—through Svenningsen, Director in the Foreign Office—forbade this, making it clear that every possible means would, if necessary, be used to prevent Kaj Munk from preaching. In spite of this, it was Kaj Munk's intention to take the service if possible, since in any case it is entirely illegal to forbid a clergyman to preach unless he has first been unfrocked; but Dr. Helweg, the vicar, who was responsible for the service, did not think it wise to defy the ban, and so Kaj Munk left for home on the Sunday morning. At 1.30 p.m. Dr. Helweg announced from the pulpit that, in consequence of a ban imposed by the German authorities, Kaj Munk would not be giving the sermon. The vast crowd which thronged the Church stayed nevertheless, and so Dr. Helweg himself conducted the service and preached a sermon so frank and straightforward as to be a memorable experience.

"Bishop Fuglsang Damgaard has lodged a protest against the ban."